

Storm Country Polly

by Grace Miller White
Illustrated by R.H. Livingstone

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CHAPTER IX.

In spite of the weight of apprehension that pressed upon the Silent City, Polly's soul insisted on singing with gladness. She found opportunity, even in the midst of her busy hours, to live over and over the adventures of that evening in the Robertson house. When she remembered how Robert had held her in his arms, her happiness made her almost faint.

She allowed Jerry's glancing blouse to fall neglected in her lap, as in imagination she dwelt on every incident of her visit. She recalled the thrilling tenderness in Robert's words, and her face grew soft in delightful reverie.

A sound at the door brought her thoughts back and she glanced up, startled. Unnoticed, the blouse dropped to the floor as Evelyn Robertson came in. Embarrassed and in silence, Pollyop arose and offered her a chair.

"You ain't feeling well, I bet," she burst out, wiping the dust from the rope seat of the rocker with her skirt. "You look white like the moon does before a rain. Go on, an' sit down!"

Sinking back, Evelyn looked steadily up at her. Then she caught at the hand resting on her shoulder.

"Pollyop, I've come to you because you're the only friend I have," she exclaimed, tears misting her eyes.

"I'm awful glad you come to me," Polly breathed softly. "You want me to run to Oscar again? I can't stand the sight of that duffer, but I'll go just the same. Have you got a letter?"

Wiping her eyes, Evelyn shook her head.

"No, but Oscar wants to see you," she replied. She paused and studied the girl. "Polly," she continued,



"I'm Awful Glad You Come to Me," Polly Breathed Softly.

"don't you want to do something for— for your people? There's a way, Pollyop, that you can—"

Impulsively Polly could not wait. "Do you mean help Daddy Hopkins an' the rest of 'em?" she interrupted. Evelyn nodded.

"Yes, every one in the settlement." A brilliant smile lit up Pollyop's countenance.

"I'd give inches out of my hide to do that," she declared. "Go on, an' yap it to me."

"Then sit down, dear," entreated Evelyn, "and don't stare at me so!"

To have saved her life, Pollyop could not drag her eyes away, but obediently she sat down on the floor. Evelyn fidgeted under the searching, honest gaze.

"You know, Polly," she stammered, "how it is between Mr. MacKenzie and me. I can make him do anything I say. Oh, if I were free from Oscar Bennett!"

"Then you could marry Old Marc, huh?" Polly interposed with a bob of the chestnut curls, "an' boss him, I bet."

"Something like that, Polly," Evelyn admitted. "That's why I've come to you. When I'm free, I can make Mr. MacKenzie let up on your people."

Anxiously weighing every word, Polly's quick mind ran on ahead.

"An' to do that," she threw in, "you got to get shut of Oscar! I don't blame you for wantin' to, but how be you goin' to work it, Miss Eve? I can't see no help for the squatters if your marryin' Old Marc's part of it."

"That's what I'm trying to tell you, Polly," was the quick retort, "but I want your promise. You help me, and I'll help you and your people. Oscar says he'll free me if—if—you'll marry him."

For an instant Polly's head whirled as it had been suddenly struck and

over her came a weight almost unbearable. Then slowly she shook her curly head.

"I couldn't do that, ma'am," she choked. "I just couldn't."

"But you said you would," retorted Evelyn sharply. "You must. I can save the squatters, and I will; but only on condition that you help me get rid of Oscar Bennett. Mr. MacKenzie is going to buy the Bennett farm, and—"

"An' Oscar'll be goin' away somewhere else?" put in Polly. "Is that it? He'd take me away from Daddy Hopkins an' from—"

She caught herself just in time. She had it on the tip of her tongue to add the name of Robert Percival, but of course she did not.

"I couldn't ever do that," she ended. "Never, never!"

The blue eyes looked into the brown eyes seriously.

"Oh, yes, you can," insisted Miss Robertson. "Oscar's not the worst in the world, and he'll have a lot of money when he leaves Ithaca. He loves you, Pollyop, and he'd make life easy and pleasant for you."

A thoughtful moment or two passed, while Polly Hopkins gazed at her hands locked together in her lap.

"You can't tell me nothin' about Oscar," she remarked at length. "I know the dirty duffer, an' I don't know nothin' good about him, you can bet your boots on that."

She paused while through the open doorway her eyes were fixed upon a fleecy cloud, high up in the deep blue sky. "But that don't make no difference," she continued. "If I linked up with Oscar, would that pup, Old Marc, let the squatters stay in the Silent City?"

"Why, Polly, dear, of course he will! I talked with Oscar last night, and I'll speak to Mr. MacKenzie just as soon as you promise to do what Oscar wants."

Again the smiling face of Robert Percival cut across Polly Hopkins' mental vision, and through the silence of the shanty she heard his voice—deep, low and like music. Then the evil face of Bennett wormed itself into her mind. Her lids drooped, and she shuddered.

"I couldn't do it, ma'am," she wailed. "I just couldn't do that!"

Evelyn arose and stood over her. "You must, Polly," she asserted again. "Good heavens, it's the chance of your life! Of course you'll do it, Polly Hopkins. Take a little time to think it over. I'll bring Oscar to see you some day when Mr. MacKenzie and my cousin Robert are away."

At the sound of that beloved name, Polly's head fell forward.

"Scout now," she said, her curls hiding her face. "I'll think about it."

After Evelyn had gone, Polly mechanically resumed her sewing. It seemed that her heart's joy had wholly died within her. Patiently she tried to turn her attention to the work in her hands, but again and again she caught herself sitting with idle fingers.

Finally, worried by the conflicting emotions that were crowding in upon her, Polly flung herself into the open and ran swiftly along the ragged rocks to a little glen where many a time she had been before. Here she waded through the brook and sank down beside it. Mind-picture after mind-picture passed before her. She saw Daddy Hopkins happy with Jerry in the shanty, no longer afraid to fish and hunt. Then she visioned the Silent City, safe at last, and saved by her. Her head sank into her hands; and sobs racked her slender body.

But it was not long before she sat up and tossed back her curls. It seemed as if she had heard a voice. She turned her head slowly; and lo, Robert Percival was standing across the creek, smiling at her.

"I followed you, Polly Hopkins," he called, and springing across the water, he added: "You ran so fast I lost you at the corner of the ragged rocks, and it's taken me all this time to find you."

He sat down beside her and took her hands; but Polly could not look up at him. Embarrassed beyond utterance, she withdrew her fingers, letting them fall listlessly. Robert laughed. Her lovely face, first white then scarlet, only told him that she was glad to see him, and spoke of girlish innocence, dear to all men.

"You went away so suddenly the other night," he ran on. "I didn't have a chance to say half I wanted to. I had something for you, too, but couldn't get away until today to bring it down."

He pulled a little roll of paper from his pocket and handed it to her. Wonderingly she opened it, and there was an exact reproduction of "The Greatest Mother in the World."

Polly was so overcome she continued silent.

"Don't you like it, little Pollyop?" queried Robert, putting his fingers under her chin and raising her face to his.

"Yes," whispered, blushing.

"Sure, sure I do. I love it."

"Then why don't you smile?" he demanded; and as she shyly complied with his request, he ran on: "I've talked with MacKenzie, and he's so set— Confound it! He makes me so hot I can scarcely listen to him. But, Polly dear, I'll do everything I can. I've got money and friends, as well as he has, and I'll use 'em too. Will you trust me, sweet?"

She bowed her head in grateful assent. How she thrilled at the touch of the warm, white hand!

"Look at me, dearie," he begged, and, when she did flash him a rosy glance, he caught her to him. "I love you, little girl," he whispered.

"An' love's the greatest thing in Ithaca, ain't it?" she murmured in trembling confusion.

"Yes, yes," he breathed. "Little girl—oh, my littlest dear—"

His voice trailed away, and his passionate kisses made Polly Hopkins forget everything but him. Primeval passion rose within her. She had found her man, and nothing should take him from her.

Then while Robert was telling her of his hopes and plans, rehearsing his love for her and his desire to help her read and study, they walked slowly back along the ragged rocks in the direction of the shanty.

They were almost at Polly's home before he left her. She watched him stride up the hill, and, after he had disappeared, she threw herself flat upon the earth; and mingled with the bird's song in the willow trees, and the rippling of the waves upon the shore, came her cry:

"Oh, God dear, I can't marry Oscar, I can't! I only have to help the squatters some other way, darlin'!"

The days that followed, bringing with the spring flowers flocks of summer birds, seemed an eternity to Polly Hopkins. She went about her duties as one in a dream. In spite of Robert's efforts, several of the fishermen had been sent to the Ithaca jail for petty crimes.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

So It Goes.

Some poor women haven't enough to wear and some rich women won't wear enough.—Louisville Courier-Journal.

"Kill-the-Blues Cope," King of Humorists, Really Preaches Religion of Laughter

Herbert Leon Cope, Who Thrilled and Inspired Two Million Doughboys During War, to Talk Here Soon.

Herbert Leon Cope, who thrilled 2,000,000 doughboys with his eloquence during the late war and the same Cope who has talked to almost as many civilians before and since the war. He is popularly known as the "King of Humorists." The army called him "Kill-the-Blues Cope."

Cope has been one of the sensations of the Lyceum and Chautauqua world for the past three years. He is better than ever on his present tour, and the enthusiastic press notices which have chased him around the country on his present Lyceum trip are said to be the most flattering ever received by an American lecturer.

Cope is not only a humorist, but he is a great preacher. Not an orthodox, ordained minister you understand, but a man who preaches through inspiration and through the grasp he gets on his hearers by means of his wonderful humor.

Cope's personal story is an interesting one. Fifteen years ago he was a very popular lecturer just coming into fame. A few years later, through loose companionships he fell—and fell hard. For several years he was in the depths and the world forgot Herbert Leon Cope. Then came the war, and with it came an awakened manhood. The years had left their cruel markings, but something whispered that still he might do some good—for someone. He came back—just as hard as he fell. He talked "right living" in the army camps—for Uncle Sam could not use him as a soldier. His work was a big hit, and before the armistice he had addressed more than 2,000,000 soldiers. Cope's work was one of the sensations in the morale program during the war. He is better than ever now, and still preaching the doctrine of sunshine and clean living.

School Course, Church of Christ, Thursday, April 6

NORTH EAST KEENE
Clarence Siefert was a caller in Greenville, Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Ellison and son, Elroy, spent Saturday in Saranac.

Arthur Jenkins and mother and Wayne Higgins, called on Henry Lee Sunday afternoon.

Winifred Johnson and his family are now settled in the old home again.

Theodore Scheid and Nick Andres were in Saranac Monday.

Mr. Kessler is visiting his daughter, Mrs. Theodore Scheid.

Miss Noema Byrnes spent her vacation at home.

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Houseman spent Sunday at Albert Houseman

and mother's.

Mr. and Mrs. Matt Laux took dinner at Fred Scheid's, Sunday.

Paul Kison was a caller, Saturday at Saranac.

Joe Shindorf was in Ionia one day last week.

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KEENE

Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Sparks and two children spent Friday with their parents, Mr. and Mrs. M. D. Hull. They had a family dinner in honor of their children and son, Gilbert, of Bruce Crossing.

Mrs. N. E. Higgins is on the sick list at this writing with a cold. Eddie Scott's little son does not get along very fast after the scarlet fever.

Gilbert Hull and Lester Hopkins spent Saturday and Sunday in Saranac.

Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins called on N. E. Higgins, Friday night.

Vern Scott was seen on our street Monday.

N. E. Higgins and James Hopkins were in Belding, Saturday.

Albert Hopkins, who has been sick with a cold and grip is able to start to school again.

Mr. and Mrs. Dan Carr were in Saranac, Friday.

Gilbert Hull will start for home Tuesday, the 4th. He will stop at Lake City and see his brother, Riley Hull and sister, Mrs. Ella Pinkney.

COOKS CORNERS

Mrs. Walter Fiske spent part of the week with her daughter, Mrs. Rollie Rising, of Saranac.

Mrs. Bert Storey and son, Alvin, were in Grand Rapids, Saturday afternoon.

Mrs. B. A. Boss, who has been seriously ill the past three weeks was taken to Community hospital, Friday. Her friends hope she will soon be better.

John Morse and wife and Walter Fiske and wife called on Alfred Locke at Ionia, Wednesday.

C. M. Hubbard fell in front of the garage, Thursday morning, breaking the small bone in his ankle, laying him up for some time.

Frank Carpenter and John Kronk have been on the sick list for the past week.

A family from Grand Rapids have rented the Donner farm and moved in last week.

The cemetery meeting will be held with Mrs. Storey, Wednesday afternoon, April 12. All interested urged to be present.

Frank Hubbard and wife, Frank Belding and wife and Ed. Reeves and family were Sunday callers at C. M. Hubbard's.

Miss Minnie Dolph spent Sunday at E. J. Reeves'.

Mrs. Don Fiske returned from Grand Rapids, Tuesday.



Neil Sturgeon and wife and daughter, Marian, spent Sunday at J. C. and Lawrence Bradford's.

Mrs. John Donovan and daughter Bernice spent Sunday with her father, John Mason.

Ira Mosher, of Grand Rapids, spent the week end with his mother Mrs. Frank Mosher.

Wallace Updike had business at Grand Rapids, Wednesday.

Lee Miller has been sick with the grip the past week.

GRATTIAN

The L. A. S. held at the Masonic hall election was well attended, proceeds of dinner and supper were \$55.75.

Mrs. Frank Donovan returned to her home Saturday after visiting a few days with her sister, Mrs. Jud Smith, of Lansing, who has been very sick.

Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Whittenbach gave a 7 o'clock dinner in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Russell McKinney. Guests present were: Mr. and Mrs. Will Lessiter and children, Mr. and Mrs. Platt Rowland and parents of the bride.

Mr. and Mrs. Don Donovan spent Saturday evening at Fred Sweet's of Cannonsburg.

Willis Souffron, of Rockford, and Herb Swan, of Grand Rapids, were visitors at Harley Weller's Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. Will Lessiter and children spent Sunday at Charles Bear's.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Randall and children of Cedar Springs spent Saturday night and Sunday at Charles Bear's.

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Special Notice

Commencing March 6th, the Greenville, Belding & Ionia Bus Schedule will be as follows:

Read Down				Read Up			
p m	p m	a m	a m	a m	a m	p m	p m
4:00	1:30	10:00	7:30	Lv. Greenville	Ar. Belding	8:30	11:30
4:30	2:00	10:30	8:00	Belding	Ar. Ionia	2:00	5:00
4:55	2:35	10:55	8:25	Orleans	Lv. Ionia	1:35	4:35
5:30	3:00	11:30	9:00	Ar. Ionia	Lv. Ionia	10:00	1:00

Sunday Schedule Same as Usual

Close connections at Ionia for Portland, Grand Ledge, Lansing, Lyons, Pawama, St. Johns, Owosso

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